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with the blood of heroes', makes good sense, but does not seem to be supported by any philological evidence. The renderings 'resounded,' *klatschte* (suggesting the noise of wading in blood, or the splashing of blood on the ground), 'streamed,' *wurde gedüngt*, and *wurde versteckt*, besides having only very far-fetched derivations, are in the main either exaggerated or inappropriate in meaning.

A more suitable explanation is suggested by the Gothic *dauns* = *Dunst*, *Geruch*, 'steam,' 'smell.' From this we should regularly expect a weak verb *daunjan* or *daunōn*; neither of these is recorded in Gothic, but the Icel. derives a verb in the *-nan* class from *daunn*. Goth. *daunjan* would be in Anglo-Saxon (*dēanian*) *dienan* (*dēnan*, cf. Sievers, *AgS. Gram.* §§. 97, 99), *dýnan*, pret. *dien(e)de*, *dēn(e)de*, *dýn(e)de*; Goth. *daunōn* would be A.S. *dēanian* pret. *dēanode*.

Now taking into consideration the striking appropriateness of such an expression in the context, it seems very probable that the passage under discussion originally read *feld dýn(e)de*, or *deanode*, *secga swate*, 'the field reeked with the blood of heroes.' Wheloc's reading supports the first of the two forms here proposed; the second more readily explains the variants *dennode*, *dennade*, since *ea* could easily be misread *en*.

JOHN HEISS.

Purdue University.

GERMAN LITERATURE.

Immermann's Merlin, by KURT JAHN. Palæstra, ed. Alois Brandl and Erich Schmidt. Part III. Berlin: Mayer and Müller, 1899.

KURT JAHN has undertaken to apply the method of psychological criticism to Karl Immermann's drama *Merlin*. He has brought out some facts of interest to the student of Immermann's works and personality, but in treating these facts as an all-sufficient cause for the creation of the drama *Merlin*, he reaches conclusions that can by no means stand as the self-evident truths as which they are proclaimed. The most that can be said in their favor is, that they contain at times an element of possibility, but hardly of probability, much less of certainty.

Psychological criticism, after all has been said in its favor, is at best suggestive as to deductions, but it can never itself draw conclusions as to absolute truths. For there are always elements of the creative faculty that escape the scalpel and microscope, and the bearing of these incommensurate factors upon a given work of art can never be wholly disregarded in forming a critical judgment of the work. Kurt Jahn, however, as it seems to us, does so disregard them in his treatment of *Merlin*, and this disregard has led him into error. There are striking instances of false deductions in his treatise. It will suffice to point out two of these.

1. Kurt Jahn reaches the startling conclusion (pp. 44, 66) that in the figure of Klingsohr, Immerman caricatured the *weltanschauung* and the character of Goethe.

The fact that Klingsohr is on the whole a creation of Immermann's own, evidently tempted Kurt Jahn to search for the psychological causes of this creation. Unhappily he finds in one of Immermann's letters to Tieck (Nov. 28, 1837) the following statement:

"Ich hätte Goethe sehr gern gesehen, mich dünkt, dass sein Wesen grade in diesem sonderbaren Augenblick eine eigenthümliche Anschauung gewähren musste. Auf der anderen Seite tröstet mich wieder die Betrachtung, dass ein persönliches Zusammentreffen mir wahrscheinlich denn doch die Figur meines Klingsohr verrückt haben würde."

This statement, Kurt Jahn thinks, must associate Goethe and Klingsohr, particularly as he finds in Immermann's letters a few other scattered remarks and innuendoes that are apparently directed against Goethe.

The following facts, however, bearing on Immermann's relation to Goethe, could not be disputed by Kurt Jahn. Up to the year 1830, approximately, Immermann had been a stanch admirer of Goethe, freely acknowledging his greatness, though not closing his eyes to his errors and faults. During his literary career he had been more or less under the paramount influence of the writer of *Faust* and *Wilhelm Meister*. He had unmercifully ridiculed the petty attacks upon the latter work. Furthermore, at Goethe's death, Immerman arranged and directed the impressive ceremony at the theatre at Düsseldorf, and

wrote his deep-felt lines on the passing away of the great master. How sincerely Immermann felt the loss of this life is further evident from a letter to his brother upon receipt of the news. He writes:

"A part of my own existence seems to be wanting; I feel a loss which causes me to look at everything as worthless or broken. The passing away of a young, striving, life may affect us greatly; but more tragic, more incisive is the loss of a striving life, great and important, that has been spun out to its last thread. Even the perfect, the complete, is after all but a fragment, it also must pass away—such is the feeling that lays hold of one at this time with curious force and power."

Somehow these facts must be made to support the view that Klingsohr is Goethe. In attempting to do so Kurt Jahn commits the mistake, so common to psychological criticisms, of treating facts from a preconceived point of view. His reasoning, if so it may be called, is deductive rather than inductive, and psychological analysis will always go astray when applied in this manner.

The substance of his reasoning is briefly this: Goethe's influence over Immermann had heretofore been so great and so insidious that, all unknown to him, it had controlled the best he had written. As he advanced in life and felt the need of reaching an independent view of life, he began to realize the extent of his dependence upon Goethe. This realization came to him shortly before he began to write *Merlin*. He was haunted by the fear of losing his personality in that of Goethe, thus at least Kurt Jahn asserts. This was one factor of his resentment against Goethe. A second factor was furnished in a certain growing envy of Goethe's fame due to Goethe's apparent indifference to Immermann's early works and to Goethe's dictatorship in literary Germany. Controlled by these feelings, Immermann gradually worked himself into a state of unreasoning hatred of Goethe. Thus the determination to free himself from the influence of Goethe, and envious hatred of the man and his position, became the two leading factors in Immermann's attitude towards Goethe, and they naturally controlled him when he wrote *Merlin*. For in order to assert his own self, and to satisfy his hate and envy, Immermann proceeded to construct an

arbitrary, even false picture of Goethe's *weltanschauung* and character in those of Klingsohr. Against these he then set up his own *weltanschauung* and ideal in the person of *Merlin*, and by making *Merlin* victorious over Klingsohr satisfied both his desire for independence and his hatred. To Kurt Jahn Immermann's requiem on the death of Goethe, and his high esteem of Goethe ever afterward, are perfectly compatible with such reasoning, nay they rather sustain it.

"For," says Kurt Jahn, "when *Merlin* was completed, Immermann was convinced that it was a masterwork. He had proved to his own satisfaction that he could be independent of Goethe and still write a great work. Therefore, he felt that he could be magnanimous, and having vented his spleen, he could thereafter reach a juster estimate of Goethe's worth and philosophy."

Without attempting to give here what would seem to be the most natural meaning of Immermann's above-quoted words to Tieck, it will suffice to call attention to a few facts that destroy the ready assumptions of Kurt Jahn in this argument.

FIRST: Goethe had not remained wholly indifferent or silent in respect to the works sent to him by Immermann, and Immermann could not therefore resent Goethe's neglect to respond to his early enthusiasm. In 1823 he was still a champion of Goethe, and in 1827—three years before the *Merlin* was actually undertaken—Goethe expressed himself approvingly to Holtei on some of Immermann's youthful writings, an opinion which Holtei had taken pains to convey to Immermann in a letter.

SECOND: Immermann's resentment on account of Goethe's dictatorship was not directed against Goethe, but against those who indulged in unreasonable hero-worship and saw no hope for German literature after the death of Goethe. There is not even a trace of anything like hatred in any statement of Immermann's.

THIRD: There is no evidence in all of Immermann's writings of such a perverted conception of Goethe's *weltanschauung* as Kurt Jahn is forced to assume in order to identify Klingsohr with Goethe.

FOURTH: Immermann was not so certain of the greatness of his work at the time of its

completion (see Immermann's statement as given by Kurt Jahn himself, pp. 110, 111, 113) as Jahn asserts, and consequently could not have allowed himself to form a more unbiased opinion of his assumed adversary because he thought he had established his independence. If the argument that Immermann created the character of Klingsohr and wrote the drama *Merlin* to establish his independence from Goethe were correct, then inasmuch as Immermann was not himself certain whether it was a piece of impressive poetry or a "monstrosity," it ought of necessity to follow that his resentment against Goethe, and Goethe's influence over him would be all the greater. But the fact is undeniable that hardly two months after *Merlin* was completed (January, 1831), Immermann showed not merely an enthusiastic admiration of Goethe, but what is still more unaccountable, a noble and just appreciation of his worth as a man and a poet. How could Immermann, if he really was so incapable of comprehending Goethe's *weltanschauung*, have gained a just estimate of this *weltanschauung* within a few months?

FIFTH: Immermann believed that the best and noblest in life emanated from the individual. This belief was most strong when *Merlin* was undertaken (see Immermann's statement to Beer). How then could Immermann cavil with Goethe for holding a similar belief?

SIXTH: Immermann's *Merlin*, as Kurt Jahn himself admits, was unconsciously influenced by Goethe, perhaps more so than any other work. Would this have been possible if Immermann had first become aware of the nature of Goethe's influence over him and then written *Merlin* to signify his breaking away from Goethe?

II. That *Merlin* was based upon the ultimate contradiction of all things in life as its tragic element, would be evident from the drama itself, even if the poet had not expressly so stated. But Kurt Jahn finds it necessary to determine how Immermann came to formulate such a view of life. The temptation to analyze this psychological process was too great for Kurt Jahn to resist. The result

of his analysis is briefly this: The misfortunes and contradictions of Immermann's own life brought about a mood in which he saw the facts and conditions of life distorted.

Therefore, his view of life as presented in the drama *Merlin* was not grounded in the nature of the poet, but, being wholly determined by his individual life-experiences, would change as soon as these changed.

That a poet's life-experiences will, to a certain extent, influence his views, that they will most frequently tend to crystallize or precipitate elements held in solution, no one would attempt to gainsay. But to claim for them the absolutely determining power that Kurt Jahn does, in the case of Immermann, is little short of foolhardy. Life experiences are in themselves largely determined by the nature of the man, and far more so if the man happens to be blessed or cursed, as the case may be, with the artistic temperament. This truth is so self-evident, that even Kurt Jahn unwittingly agrees to it. For after having devoted the second part of his thesis to an attempt to prove the above assertion, we find on page 59 the remarkable statement (remarkable because it flatly contradicts his previous conclusion): "the central idea of *Merlin* is grounded absolutely in the nature of the poet." When Kurt Jahn has learned the important truth: that a critic cannot take a single work of a poet's from out its setting of other works, much less a poet from the setting of his time and its silent influences, and treat it or him as an isolated phenomenon, then his deductions may become valuable contributions.

The *Palæstra* is devoted to the publication of articles which are the result of research work done under the guidance of Prof. Alois Brandl or Erich Schmidt, and which are recommended by them "*ihrer wissenschaftlichen Bedeutung wegen*." If it were not for this fact, the deductions of Kurt Jahn in the article criticised would hardly merit more than casual notice. Some of the material, however, presented in the article is new, and the analysis of the drama itself deserves commendation.

J. F. COAR.

Harvard University.